

VERMONT PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION

HARDSHIP ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURES

The Vermont Principals' Association Policies state, "students have four (4) consecutive years or eight (8) consecutive semesters of eligibility for participation in school activities" (VPA By-Laws and Policies, Article III Eligibility, Section 3 Eligibility Limitations, Part G). In addition, Part H also states that no student may participate in the same sport for more than four seasons.

These rules are important to assure that students progress to graduation, and do not delay academic progress for athletic reasons. "Red-shirting" – the practice of allowing students who delay academic promotion and graduation to obtain an additional year of eligibility – would be harmful to the educational process of Vermont students. It would also undermine fair competition and pressure students to delay their own progress to remain competitive. In the absence of strict rules prohibiting eligibility beyond four consecutive years or eight consecutive semesters, "red-shirting" would damage Vermont students.

The VPA will consider providing students with hardship waivers, but only under extraordinary circumstances. Only schools can apply for hardship waivers; students or parents cannot make the application. To be eligible for a waiver, the school must establish each of the following: 1) the student would suffer hardship by the strict application of the VPA eligibility rule; 2) choice by either the student or his/her parents or guardians played no role in the circumstances causing the need to request the waiver; 3) the waiver will not have an adverse impact on other students or the fairness of competition; 4) the waiver does not encourage or reward delay of the normal progression toward graduation.

Typically, the approvals of hardship applications involve circumstances in which a student is unable to stay in school because of circumstances beyond the student's choice or control, such as a medical condition, death of a parent, or the student is forced from a home. Typically, hardship applications will be denied in cases involving any choice on the part of the student or family, such as a student's disagreement with parents or schools, or a student's desire to change living situations or schools. Typically, a hardship application will be denied in cases in which the student's attitude or actions contributed to the hardship situation. Medical conditions that prevent athletic participation, but do not prevent progression toward graduation (whether in the school or with out of school assistance) do not provide a basis for hardship petitions.

PROCEDURES FOR APPLYING FOR A HARDSHIP WAIVER

After reading the above, if it appears that a student may qualify for a hardship waiver, a school may file a hardship request with the Vermont Principals' Association. Only schools (not parents or students) may file this hardship request and must complete all steps listed below.

1. Completion of the Hardship Waiver Form.
2. Attach a letter(s) from the school's Principal (on school letterhead) that supports the hardship request (if a school does not support the request, then it should not be filed).

3. Attach a copy of the student's transcript(s)
4. Attach a letter from the parent and/or student that documents and explains the hardship issue.
5. Attach any other supporting documentation (letters, reports, etc.).

Once completed, the application and attached documents are to be sent to the Vermont Principals' Association, 2 Prospect Street, Montpelier, VT 05602. No official action will be given to the package until all documentation is received.

Upon receipt of the completed package, a hearing will be scheduled with the Activity Standards Committee. Schools will be notified of the time and date of the hearing and will have representatives (including the student and/ or parents) present at the meeting. Please note that eligibility hearings will only be held **four** times per year. Contact Bob Johnson for dates of upcoming ASC meetings. bjohnson@vpaonline.org or 1-802-229-0547.

No cases will be heard during a sports season unless there is an extenuating circumstance, which was beyond the control of the school.

VPA HARDSHIP ELIGIBILITY APPLICATION

Schools are to use this application form when requesting a hardship waiver. Schools are to complete the hardship form, attach all necessary documents (letter(s) from school, student, parents, etc.) including an official transcript and a listing of the activities the student has participated in. This packet is then to be returned to the Vermont Principals' Association, 2 Prospect Street, Montpelier, VT 05602.

SECTION I. STUDENT INFORMATION

To be completed by the student and school administrator initiating the process.

Name _____ Date of Birth _____ Grade Level _____
First MI Last

Student's Current Address _____ Telephone # _____

Parent's Current Address _____ Telephone # _____

Current School _____ Administrator's Name _____ Today's Date _____

Current School Address _____ Telephone # _____

SECTION II. PREVIOUS HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC EXPERIENCE

Indicate the student's number of years of high school experience in each sport.
List year, grade, name of sport(s) and level played (ie. Varsity, JV, Freshman).

YEAR	SCHOOL	GRADE	NAME OF SPORTS/LEVEL PLAYED

SECTION III. REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR HARDSHIP EXEMPTION

The school is responsible for submitting all of the required (indicated by *) documents listed below. Additional non-required documentation (letters of support, etc.) may also be included in the packet.

A hardship waiver may only be granted under one or more of the following categories. **Check the appropriate category.**

_____ **Refugee** _____ **Medical** _____ **Situational**

_____ * a) statement from the school's Principal which supports the hardship waiver request.

_____ * b) statement from the parent(s)/guardian that explains, in detail, the hardship situation encountered.

